

City-wide Parking Ad Hoc Committee
Wednesday, August 5, 2015
MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT**Call to Order**

Co-chair Mordo opened the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

Roll Call (✓ = Committee members in attendance)

✓	Ronit Bodner	✓	Jean Mordo
✓	Jeannie Bruins		Mark Rogge
✓	Kim Cranston	✓	David Rock
✓	Gary Hedden	✓	Lou Becker
✓	Jack Kelly	✓	Marcia Somers, CM
✓	Bill Maston	✓	James Walgren, CDD
✓	Mike McTighe		

Approve July 15, 2015 meeting minutes

Motion: Rock/Kelly: Approve the July 15, 2015 meeting minutes. Passed 8-0-3, with Bruins, McTighe and Rogge absent.

Sub-committee updates**E. Alternative options to reduce parking demand (G. Hedden/M. McTighe)**

Gary Hedden presented 13 recommendations developed by the subcommittee and asked for input from the Committee to identify three recommendations to move forward. The Committee discussed and provided feedback regarding the recommendations.

Comments were heard from Ted Sorensen and Bart Nelson.

D. Parking in-Lieu program (R. Bodner/K. Cranston/D. Rock/M. Rogge)

Ronit Bodner presented the draft recommendation.

Identify future agenda items

No future items were identified.

The Committee agreed to move the August 19, 2015 meeting to August 26, 2015.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

Alternatives Report v2 **DRAFT**
August 12, 2015

Background

A vibrant and successful downtown is a benefit to all Los Altos residents and good traffic and parking management is a key component to that success. The parking “alternatives” subcommittee evaluated options to manage parking supply as well as some of the many options to reduce demand or increase supply.

Discussion/Recommendations

Parking management. Two of the most effective parking management tools are time limits and pricing.¹ The backbone that makes it all work is enforcement.

- *Time limits.* Time limits set to achieve 85% peak use facilitate good use of the available space and are one of the most important tools for parking management,² yet time limits are barely discussed in the CDM Smith 2013 Report.³ Attachment 1 shows current conditions. Shorter times limits (90 minutes) on Main, State and Plazas 4, 5 and 6 (the Central Plazas) would encourage employee parking in Plazas 1-3 and 7-10, thus freeing up the more desirable spaces for customers. The 90 minute limit at Safeway seems to be working well. Moreover, most customers need less than 60 minutes (65% of those using on-street parking).⁴ **Recommended.**
- *Permits.* Permits (white dot program) to move long term parkers (employees) to more distant locations will allow customers better access to close locations. The CDM Smith 2013 Report recommended that the white dot program be expanded⁵ and 111 spaces were added to the existing 533, giving a total of 644 spaces.⁶ Los Altos sells 1000 annual permits and 100 quarterly permits. The subcommittee discovered that permits are currently “sold out,” the second straight year that annual permits have been sold out.⁷ This leads some employees to use parking that is better suited for customers. The subcommittee recommends more permits be made available and the price increased from \$36/year. Menlo Park charges \$592; Palo Alto charges \$466. If Los Altos raises the fee to \$100, there is the potential of more than \$100,000 in funding to support parking programs. **Recommended.**
- *Sensors.* Real time guidance, e.g., sensors + app, allows users to locate available parking spaces. This avoids wasteful and time consuming driving (substantial traffic at peak demand can be due to “cruising,” looking for an open spot).⁸ The cost to install sensors on Main, State and the Central Plazas (about 400 stalls) can be funded by the

¹ Parking Management for Smart Growth, Richard Willson, p. 27

² Parking Management for Smart Growth, Richard Willson, p. 37

³ CDM Smith 2013 Report, p. 68, <http://www.losaltosca.gov/community/page/downtown-parking-management-plan>

⁴ CDM Smith 2013 Report, p. 40, Table 1-16

⁵ CDM Smith 2013 Report, p. 60

⁶ James Walgren, personal communication

⁷ Tuck Younis, personal communication

⁸ Parking Management for Smart Growth, Richard Willson, p. 33

dot permits, paid parking and/or in-lieu fees. Sensors allow better enforcement of the time limits. **Recommended.**

- *Smart Meters.* Smart Meters with dynamic pricing allow more spaces to be available when actually needed. Smart Meters are successfully used in many cities, and can be cost effective with as few as 200 meters.⁹ The recommended Smart Meter option is to install meters on Main, State and the Central Plaza (400 meters). These should be the most advanced Smart Meters available. Dynamic pricing encourages turn-over as pricing can go up over time. The first 20 minutes can be free, then the rate can be 50 or 75 cents/hour. It is dynamic in that the effect on parking can be measured, and the hourly charge adjusted to achieve the 85% peak use goal. **Recommended.**
- *Enforcement.* Enforcement is an essential tool for parking management, although it has the potential to create considerable ill will. The CDM Smith 2013 Report recommends graduated fines, first citation at \$54.50, second at \$90.80, third and subsequent at \$151.40 with a reset each 12 months.¹⁰ The subcommittee recommends a warning citation with the first offense, second at \$54.50, third and subsequent at \$90.80. We do not support the \$151.40 fine (too extreme). We do support a warning citation with the first offense whenever significant changes are made to the parking management strategy, e.g., the recent start of enforcement on Mondays and Saturdays. **Recommended.**
- *Regular evaluation.* Regular evaluation is a key element of effective parking management. Parking demand changes with time and will change as the recommended options in this report are adopted and take effect. “Set it and forget it” is not a good policy¹¹ and effective management is critical. **Recommended.**

Reducing demand. Some of the quickest ways to manage parking are options to reduce demand.

- *Bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure.* Bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure enhancements are important. The CDM Smith 2013 Report recommended several changes.¹² The subcommittee recommends one easy change, the addition of more U-shaped bicycle racks along Main and State. The subcommittee also recommends a bike parklet on Main in front of Red Berry to convert the one stall that forces drivers to back up into a cross walk. This also increases visibility to car traffic. **Recommended.**
- *Car share apps.* Car share apps, e.g., GetSafeGo, reduce the number of cars in town. There are a number of appropriate apps that, combined with an education campaign directed primarily at employees, can reduce demand. This is not likely to have a large impact, but the cost is low. **Recommended.**
- *Valet parking.* Valet parking has been used during peak holiday seasons and it could be used during peak lunch time demand. A valet service for employees to encourage parking on Lincoln Ave near the churches would divert many cars from Plaza parking and would be useful with shared parking (see below). Funding can come from dot

⁹ Richard Willson, Professor and Chair, Urban & Regional Planning, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, personal communication

¹⁰ CDM Smith 2013 Report, p. 58

¹¹ Parking Management for Smart Growth, Richard Willson, p. 6

¹² CDM Smith 2013 Report, p. 69

permits, paid parking and/or in-lieu fees, and there may be partners willing to help with the lunch valet option. **Recommended.**

- *Shuttle buses.* Shuttle buses make public transit a more useful option. Shuttle buses are of interest to a large number of employees and would be of immediate and significant value. This is of great interest to employers as well, as it would expand the pool of potential employees. The subcommittee wrote a survey (attachment 2), visited 125 businesses and surveyed 240 employees. The results reveal that 38% of employees would consider using a shuttle between the transit stops (train and bus) in Mountain View and downtown Los Altos. There is a clear distribution by age and geography. Younger workers are more interested and a large number of workers living in Mountain View, Menlo Park, Redwood City and San Jose are interested. Most workers living in Los Altos are not interested (the commute is easy), and most workers in Sunnyvale and very remote locations are not interested (they do not have good access to public transit heading to Mountain View). The Packard Foundation has shown that a shuttle service can be effective.¹³ The survey didn't explore a shuttle for the greater Los Altos area or for seniors, but several people have suggested it. A joint program with VTA, Mountain View, Stanford, or Foothill College may be possible. **Recommended.**
- *Autonomous shuttle.* The autonomous shuttle may be a useful option at some point and would reduce the cost of shuttle service and allow better coverage. The possibility of a pilot program in Los Altos is exciting and was recently discussed with Google.¹⁴ **Recommended.**
- *Transit passes.* Transit passes (e.g., VTA Bus, Caltrain, Uber) can make public transit a more viable option for employees, but such a program is likely to require significant staff time to manage. **Not recommended.**

Increasing supply. Creative use of the existing parking supply offers the most attractive options to effectively increase supply.

- *Shared parking.* Shared parking arrangements to make privately held space available to the public increases parking supply and generates revenue for the property owner. The zoning standards for parking need to be considered and a survey of private spaces in the downtown triangle, both commercial and residential (condominiums) conducted, but the potential is significant. Converting privately held space to public use must make financial sense to the property owners. A reverse auction can be used to establish fair market value and the program can be funded by dot permits, paid parking and/or in-lieu fees. Making the space available to just one or two businesses with large numbers of employees (e.g., restaurants) might make it more attractive to the property owners. **Recommended.**
- *Internet apps.* Internet apps, e.g., SpotOn Parking, make it possible for privately owned space to be made available to members of the app group and generate revenue to the property owner. Privately held space is available but this approach is less appealing as it is open to a largely uncontrolled group of participants and the revenue stream is uncertain. This option is probably not worth the nuisance to most

¹³ Curt Riffle, Program Officer, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, personal communication

¹⁴ Davis White, Manager, Community & Public Affairs, Google, personal communication

property owners, but it could become an important element of a shared parking solution. **Recommended.**

Conclusion

The “alternatives” subcommittee evaluated sixteen options that contribute to effective parking management, including options to reduce demand and increase supply and has recommended thirteen for implementation. The matrix illustrates the options by suggested priority, with the easiest first. All of the recommended options contribute and should be considered as a package.

Two additional options to increase supply were considered and they are included in the matrix. Any recommendations will be made by the full committee.

- *Restriping.* Restriping the plazas is being considered separately. The small diagonal areas that will be created provide good locations for bike lockers.
- *Structured parking.* Structured parking will dramatically increase supply. A 396 stall garage built on Plaza 2 or Plaza 7 with three levels of parking in a two-story above-ground structure has been estimated at \$10.5 million.¹⁵ This could be privately financed with the city providing the land, and there are city funds set aside for such a project.¹⁶ This approach will likely take considerable time and it is expensive at \$26,500 per stall, and that takes into consideration that the land is provided by the city at no cost.

Matrix of most important options

Easiest first with rough estimates on the impact to supply and the cost. The subcommittee strongly recommends that staff be assigned to manage any parking management program.

¹⁵ CDM Smith 2013 Report, p. 94

¹⁶ James Walgren, personal communication

Option	Increased Supply	Cost
Additional Permits	0	low
Changes to Time Limits	0	low
Enforcement	0	low
Car Share Apps	low	low
Bicycle Infrastructure	low	low
Restriping	200	med
Shared Parking	200	med
Valet Parking	100+	med
Sensors	0	med
Smart Meters	0	med
Shuttle Bus	200+	high
Structured Parking	400	very high

Next steps

Receive guidance from the parking committee, follow up on selected options and recommendations, develop a detailed implementation plan.

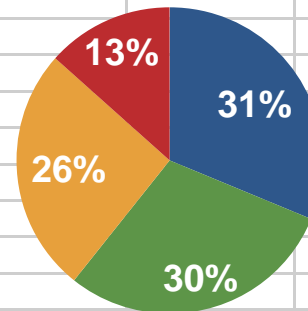
Attachment 7

Any interest in a shuttle service?

Yes, I am interested in a shuttle

No need to drive	35
Saves gas money	33
No traffic hassle	29
No need to park	15
Helps me use bus or train	8
Other	2

Yes, top four responses

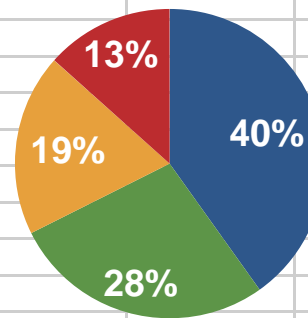


■ No need to drive ■ Saves gas money
■ No traffic hassle ■ No need to park

No, top four responses

No, I am not interested in a shuttle

May need a car that day	57
My commute is easy	39
I don't live near transit	27
Parking is easy	19
Public transit takes too long	8
I don't want to pay for it	5



■ May need a car that day ■ My commute is easy
■ I don't live near transit ■ Parking is easy

Parking Subcommittee, The Alternatives Report

Los Altos Parking Management

Three essential elements

- Good management

- Supply increased

- Demand reduced

Good Management - 1

Time Limits, Permits

- Change 2 hour limit to 60 minutes.
- Issue more white dot permits.
- Increase the permit price.

Good Management - 2

Enforcement

- Stricter enforcement.
- Consider sensors.

Good Management - 3 Oversight

- Assign one key staff person.
- Create a balanced Parking Management Committee.

Increase Supply

- Add bike racks.
- Encourage car share apps.

Reduce Demand - 1 Employee Survey

- 97% commute by car.
- 85% live outside Los Altos.
- 38% would consider a good shuttle service.

Reduce Demand - 2

Employee Survey - cont.

- The top three reasons to consider public transit:
 - “no need to drive”
 - “saves gas money”
 - “no traffic hassle”
- The top three reasons for no interest in public transit:
 - “may need a car that day”
 - “my commute is easy”
 - “don’t live near transit”
- Lack of parking is not in the top three.

Reduce Demand - 3 Shuttle Bus

- Strong employee support.
- Benefit to employees.
- Benefit to merchants.
- Benefit to residents.

Reduce Demand - 4

Shuttle Bus - issues to be addressed

- Cost.
- Funding.
- Grants.
- Other community efforts.

The parking problem can be solved

- Quick fixes

- Effective oversight
- Shorter time limits
- Sell more permits
- Effective enforcement
- Add bike parking
- Encourage car sharing

- Longer term solutions

- Shuttle service
- Parking sensors
- Smart meters
- Shared parking